Message Text

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: ENRG, PINT, IN

SUBJECT: WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTS ON INDIAN SITUATION

REF: BONN 11442

- 1. DURING HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR ON HIS TRAVELS TO DISCUSS THE ENERGY DIALOGUE, FOREIGN MINISTRY MINISTER OF STATE WISCHNEWSKI COMMENTED THAT HE HAD VISITED INDIA IN A COMPLETELY NEW SITUATION. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT AN EXPERT ON INDIA, HIS ADVISERS WERE STRUCK BY THE UNCHARACTERISTIC FREQUENT INDIAN EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE FOR PAST ASSISTANCE TO THAT COUNTRY.
- 2. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI SHE PLAYED DOWN THE DOMESTIC SITUATION AND MAINTAINED THAT SHE INTENDED TO KEEP A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. SHE EXPRESSED PRIDE THAT SO FAR SHE HAD ONLY FORBIDDEN TWO POLITICAL GROUPS. SHE EXPRESSED HER CONCERNS OVER REACTIONS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. SHE SAID THAT ABOUT A QUARTER OF THOSE ARRESTED WERE REAL POLITICAL FIGURES AND THREE-FOURTHS WERE CRIMINAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TYPES. EVENTUALLY THE GENUINE POLITICAL FIGURES

WOULD BE RELEASED.

3. WHEN WISCHNEWSKI EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS CONCERNING PRESS CENSORSHIP, PRIME MINISTER GANDHI SAID SHE UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS WOULD BE A SOURCE OF CRITICISM BUT THAT SHE COULD NOT DISCRIMINATE AMONG THE PRESS. SHE COULD NOT TREAT THE FOREIGN PRESS ONE WAY AND THE DOMESTIC PRESS ANOTHER. WISCHNEWSKI RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION OF A QUIET, CALM, ASSURED PRIME MINISTER WHO KNEW WHAT SHE WANTED AND WOULD TRY TO GET IT. HILLENBRAND

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